like it tiptop when I get a little more

used to it-that is, if I last. I was

oldest boy in a family of nine, and dad

died young, so I was brought up Natur

hours of straight-slong, pitch-in-and-

hustle Naturalness in the day's run;

been getting artificial and lazy of late

years, I guess. But I'm tough, and I'll

be all right and used to it pretty soon

-getting lots of practice. By the

"Humph!" says I, considering. "Was

That seemed to tickle her and I

though. Van eats for three; Hartley's

only up to the one-man-and-a-boy mark

so far. He'd do better if he didn't have

them blue streaks of his. Seems to

"Perhaps he's troubled about leav-

"Guess not," says I looking side-

"Dear me, no," she laughs, brisk. "I

"Oh, nothing," says I. "I ain't eyer

up the other

Agnes."

Van Brunt."

girl helping me wipe dishes

"Hold on there," says 1. "Don't

spread it too thick. I nin't got but one

hat that'll do for Sunday, and I want

that to fit me. I was giving Miss Page

a few lessons in housekeeping, and

you'd ought to thank me for that, Mr.

It seems the Taiford girl had seen

James and he had agreed to go to

Eastwich with 'em. 'Twas a good

chance for him, a soft job and all that.

Truth to tell, I guess he was kind of

sorry about parting from Van alto-

gether, the gleaning might not be so

So about six o'clock Scudder come

The Fresh Airers were pretty nigh

played out by this time. The smaller

But they was all full fed and sun-

"Well, good-by, Andrew Jackson,"

poor, pinched-up little lives.

"Sure thing," says he

plug potato skins at over there.'

down far enough to get at it.

it comes gliding again?"

you won't 'ave it."

He was a smart little coot. Had the

Lord James comes down to the

He looked at me very solemn. "You'd

island now w'lle you 'ave the chance.

There'll come a time," says he, "when

He climbed into the dory and set

down all huddled up in the stern with

his trunk between his knees. Scudder

"There," says Van, referring to his

lordship, "goes the final tie that binds

us to a sordid past. Shall we sing

begins rowing and they moved off.

shore tugging his trunk behind him.

makings of a man in him if you dug

"Yup," he says.

at the school?"

ing his business," she suggests, look-

have something on his mind."

ing sideways at the pickle dish.

my notion. He ain't in love, is he?

"Sent? I don't understand.

Does it run in the familles?"

sent here by the doctor, or who?"

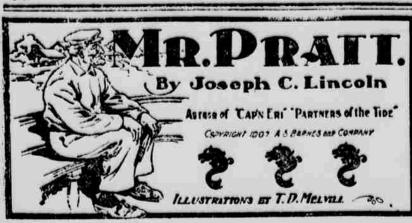
dishes.

here?

own accord."

purpose:

Natural Life?"



SYNCPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Mr. Solomon Pratt bogan comical narration of story, introducing well-to-do Nathan Scudder of his town, and ISdward Van Brunt and Martin Hartley, two rich New Yorkers socking tast. Because of latter patr's lavish ex-penditure of money, Pratt's first impres-sion was connected with lunatics.

CHAPTER II.—The arrival of James Hopper, Van Brunt's valet, gave Pratt the desired information about the New Yorkers. They wished to live what they termed "The Natural Life." Van Brunt, it was learned, was the successful suitor for the hand of Miss Agnes Page, who gave Hartley up.

CHAPTER III.—Sol Pratt was engaged as cook and the party decided to spend July Fourth in Eastwich.

CHAPTER IV They took lunch at Rastwich, Van Brunt, Hartley, Fratt and Hopper, attending.

CHAPTER V.—At Fourth of July cele-bration, Hartley rescued a boy, known as "Reddy," from under a horse's feet and the urchin proved to be one of Miss Page's charges, whom she had taken to the country for an outing. Miss Page and Hartley were separated during a flerce storm, which followed the picnic Out aniling later, Van Brunt, Hartley, Frait and Hopper were wrecked in a squalt.

CHAPTER VI. Search for them re-vealed an island upon which they were found. Van Brunt rented it and called it Ogone island.

CHAPTER VII They lived on the land and Owner Soulder trought ridic-lous presents, as a token of gratitude CHAPTER VIII Innocently Harrley and Hopper in search for clams robbed a private "quabaugh." Late at night ther island home was desurabed by wild valle CHAPTER IX.

The "Fresh-Airers" First I tried that door, then Hartley tried it, and then Van; each of us just as soft and quiet as possible. Then

we listened. Not a sound. Then Van catches me by the arm and begins to pull me and Martin back along the hall. When we got to the end, by the parlor door, he whispers,

low and cautious: "We must break the door down It's locked on the inside. Better turn it lamp on the stairs. Better turn it down, too. A light gives the other man all the advantage if it comes to shooting. Now ready, when I say the word.

All rush together. One-two-"Wait a minute," whispers Hartley -he was always cool-headed. "Where's Jataes?"

"James?" repeats Van. "What? James?"

"James?" says I. And then I begun to get my senses back. Wake a fener up out of a sound steep the way we was and it takes a few minutes for him to get on earth again.

"James!" says I. "I'll be-" "Idiot!" says Van, speaking about birase f. I judge. Then he walks down the ball and gives that door a kick. "James," he sings out. "Is that you?

Open this door." For a second or two there wa'n't a

weak and chartery: "O-o-h, my soul! ... hat's the matter with him?" says Vt. "Is he hurt? Where's the key,

skipper? Inside, of course. But-but where's the keyhole?" Then I remembered, "There ain't

any keyhole," I says. "There's no lock on the door."

"Then what-? Come on, Martin." He set his shoulder to the door and commenced to shove. Me and Hartley helped, and the door begun to open. It opened slow, because the dining table and two or three chairs and the chest of drawers was braced against it. We got in finally. "Bring the lamp," says Hartley.

done it. The room was empty. "James!" hollers Van. "James!"

The closet door opens just a crack Then it swung wide and his lordship, half dressed and white as an old clamshell, staggers into the room. "Oh!" says he. "Oh, Mr. Van Brunt, sir!"

He was shaking like a palsy. "What ails you, man?" says Hartley

"Speak up. The valet rolls his eyes around to

"I seen it," he says. "I seen it plain. It's 'im!"

"Him? Who?" says I. "The ghost. The old cove as owned

this 'ouse. 'E was up 'n my room a-waiting for me." "What are you talking about?" asks

Van, impatient. I begun to see light, but the Heavenlies didn't-not yet. "'E was up in my room, sir," said Lord James, wild like. "I 'ad me coat and waistcoat off, sir, and then I goes over to the mirror intending to see if me face looked as 'ot as it felt. And I lights my lamp and there 'e was aglaring at me. 'E 'ad 'is 'ead through the mirror, sir. And there was comas around, and wreaths. It's a warning

And then we began to laugh. "The presents!" says Van, between roars. "Scudder's heirlooms. Ho! ho!" His lordship stared at us like he thought we was crazy. I more than half pitied him. Martin did too, I guess, for he says:

to me, sir. I'm a dead man."

"It's all right, James. Just one of Mr. Van Brunt's jokes. You see-" "But I saw 'im, str. 'E was there, and there was wreaths and coffins

'ung about, and-" "K's all right," says I. "Here! come along and I'll show you.

But not one step would he stir. A Berrick wouldn't have lifted him up them stairs. So I quit trying and went Bloft and fetched down the crayon polargement and the wreath. Then I

set out to explain. "Why, you imbecile!" says Van. "Where's your taste for art? We were beautifying your room. Taking off the bare look, as per Scudder."

James' color begun to come back. And when it come it come thick. He reddened up so you could see it even through the sun-burn.

"Mr. Van Brunt," he says, getting madder every minute, "I give you notice. I leave to-morrow morning." "Don't be an idlot-" begins Van,

but he teresty the aim short. "I leave to-merrow morning," he shouts. "Ain't it enough to bring me to this Gawd-forsaken 'ole and work me 'alf to death and blister me from 'ead to foot, without this? I give you warning now. I'm going 'ome. And you be glad I ain't 'aving the law on you for this outrage. I's poor servants 'as rights, and-"

There was more, plenty more. We couldn't shut him up. And the Heavenlies' explanations didn't count either. He was dead set on leaving in the morning.

Finally, we give it up and went back to bed. Lord James said he was going to stay in the kitchen all night. Nothing would hire him to sleep in Marcellus' receiving tomb again.

"Humph!" says Hartley, as the Twins went upstairs, "It looks to me as if your joke had lost us the best valet you ever had, Van,"

Van cussed under his breath, "He shan't leave," he said. "I must keep him somehow. He's invaluable in the city, and we may go back there some time. Not for months, though of course," he adds.

But in the merning James was worse set than ever. He wouldn't belp with breakfast nor nothing, went aloft at daylight and begun to pack his trunk. He was going to leave, that's knew he was standing on the top step. all there was about it.

The Twins was pretty blue during breakfast. Van about losing his lordship and Hartley on account of sunburn, I cal'late. 'Twas another elegant day and there was wind enough to keep the files and mosquitoes away from the house. If you got in the lee anywheres, though, they was laying for you in droves. They didn't bother me much, 'count of my hide being tough and leathery and my flavor too sait maybe; but they was fattening up fast on the Heavenlies and James.

About ten o'clock Scudder shows up with the first dory load of Fresh Airers from the Eastwich place. Miss Agnes come along with 'em. Then the second load come, cap'ned by the Talford girl. And then there was doings.

Them Fresh Air young ones wa'n't all of a piece with Redny, which was a mercy. He was a handful in himself, that little sorrel-top was-but there was enough like him to keep things stirred up. Marcellus' old shingled prison had to take it that day. There must have been some stewing in Heaven if old Lady Berry could look down and see them youngsters whooping and carrying on in the front parlor. In Mrs. B.'s day that parlor was a kind of saint's rest, as you might say, and the only time anybody opened its door was when she sailed in with the broom and feather duster. And then she must have had to navigate pass, because the blinds was always shut tight and the curtains drawn and 'twas too dark to see anything.

Hartley looked out for the children and Van Brunt piloted the two girls over the place, pointing out where the garden was going to be some day, and where the hens was likely to roost and the pig to board. They seemed to be as pleased and tickled as he was, and thought everything was "lovely" and "just too quaint and dear." I was busy cooking and Lord James sulked out in the barn. He couldn't get away until late afternoon on account of the

Redny stuck to Hartley like a mudturtle to a big toe. He was right at his heels all the time. By and by the pair of 'em come out in the kitchen to

"Hello, Andrew Jackson," says I to the boy. "How do you like this part of the country?"

"Great!" says he, his eyes snapping. 'Gee, ain't we having the peach of a time!" "Must feed you well over there," I

says. "Seems to me you're getting fat already. Board's up to the mark of the Newsboys' home, ain't it?"

"You bet!" says he. "Chicken, and pie, and all the milk you want. And



cream-aw, say!" and he smacked his

"How'd you like to live here all the time?"

He shook his head. "Naw," he says. "Too still. Sometimes I can't sleep good 'cause it's so still. No El, nor whistles nor fights nor nothing. And no Chinks to chuck rocks at. Miss Agony won't let you chuck rocks at folks anyhow."

"Don't you wish you was back in New York with your dad?" I says. "Not much," he says. "The old man used to club me too good. When he was full I'd get a belting most every

Poor little shaver! It's when I see hers some folks treat children that I get to thinking I could make a better world than this is.

after a minute.

that. Hartley rumpled the youngster's

be rather pleasant to have one or two have missed it."

"You've got plenty of time yet," says I. "Maybe you'll be down in these diggings nine or ten year from now with

He smiled, kind of sad and onesided. Then he got up and walked out to the plazza. Redny hung around a spell, long enough to ask a couple mil-

the Page girl coming up the porch steps alone. Hartley stood up and lifted his cap.

"Where's Van?" he asked.

"They're all right," says Martin. Playing games in the front room." doorway "I don't just understand." Is it true that your health is bad?"

"I did feel rather gone to seed before I left town, but now I'm having the time of my life."

Wall street? I'm surprised." He didn't seem to answer-least-

frosty. "I must speak to James.

He went off down the steps and out of sight. She stood and watched him a minute, and I thought she looked puzzled-and solemn. Then she went into the parlor.

quets. They didn't fire 'em at me, you understand, but it's always the feller

that's looking on at the row who gets hit. Redny was cap'n of the gun crew. He could chuck a potato skin with his time

When the funiors was filled up-and it wa'n't no slouch of a job to get 'em filled-they went off to start a riot somewheres else and the Twins and the girls had a chance. Van got to telling about Scudder's presents, and he was funny as usual. That Margaret Talford would laugh unti! I had to join in just out of sympathy, even though I fascinator, how do you do it? Martin for me. was up to my eyes in sonpsuds and | and I fell in love with him at first dishwashing. She was a jolly girl,

Nothing would do but them "prescrayon enlargement. He had a good time and so did everybody else, especially Miss Talford.

you say your man was going to leave you, Mr. Van Brunt?"

Van heaved a sigh. "Yes," he says. I believe he is. I fear that James hasn't the artistic temperament. I confess I'm disappointed. He certainly looked as if he had it; he was sad and soulful and-and-dyspeptic. But no; even the 'Motherless Home' didn't appeal to him. He says he's going tonight."

"I wonder if he would come over to the school?" says she. "We need a man there, don't we, Agnes? To help about the place and look out for the you?" boys, and to-well, to protect us." "Lucky James!" says Van. "But why

James? Won't Martin here do-orexcuse my blushes-myself?"

perhaps he would. So the four of 'em went away for a walk on the beach and to talk it over.

I'll bet I called that valet anything but a church member and a good feller a dozen times over while I was diving into them dishes. I washed and washed till, seemed to me, I was soaked out fresh enough to bile, like a pickled codfish. And when the washing was done there was the wiping. I laid out a bale or so of dish towels and pitched in.

Pretty soon somebody says: "Mayn't I help?" I swing around and there was Agnes Page. Nice to look at, she was,

spoil your fine clothes. Besides I've got sort of used to it by this time; my arm goes round of itself, like a paddle wheel."

She laughed and grabbed a chowder plate and commenced to wipe. She done fairly well for anybody who hadn't practiced much, but she never would have won the cup for speed. One dish every five minutes is all right, maybe, if you're getting paid by the year, but— However, I judged her ma kept hired help to home. I wondered what she'd done with Hartley. By and by she says: "Mr. Pratt, how long do you expect to stay here?"

'The Last Link is Broken,' Martin? Or have you something more appropriate to suggest, skipper?"

"I have for myself," says I. "It's 'Work, for the Night Is Coming." And I hurried up to the house to get supper. CHAPTER X.

The Voyage of the Ark.

The Heavenlies was late down to breakfast next morning, owing, cal'late, to the loss of Lord James. could hear 'em hailing each other. asking: "What's become of my golf stocking?" and the like of that Trouble seemed to be that they had too many clothes. If they'd been limited to one suit for Sunday and a pair of overalls to cover up the ruins the rest of the week, like I was, they'd

breakfast was chipper as a pair of talk garden. Consarn 'em, I hoped | meal half so much as I did.

they'd forgot that. "The loam business is all right, Sol." She smiled. "No doubt they find it says Van. "Scudder will bring us loam at three dollars a boat load. He says so," she says. "How do you like the ft'll take about 15 boat loads." "Who-me? Oh, I callate I shall

dollars per? That's generous of him. Anything else?"

milk. We have decided that perhaps al, as you might say. It's been some time, though, since I had so many for the present we had better not keep & cow

was glad that milking wa'n't going to be added to the general joyfulness. "I think that's a nice, far-sighted decision," says I. "Unless you could learn your cow to eat seaweed, I don't

way," I says, "who was it that sent 'em says Van. "And we could give the "Who?" says she, looking surprised. animal the spare vegetables from the garden."

"Was Mr. Van Brunt and his chum 'Twould be a long time between meals for the poor critter, I'm afraid," "Why, I didn't know they were sent says I. "How much is Nate charging at all. I think they came here of their for the milk?"

in New York, and, when you consider how far he has to bring it, I call it dirt cheap.

guess she understood what I meant. But she didn't answer the question; garden dirt, but I didn't say nothing. went on dry-polishing the pickle dish. We're going to raise chickens, too,' Then she says, kind of accidental on "Is Mr. Hartley's health improving? "Oh, yes!" says I. "He's picking up some, 'specially in his appetite. He time." ain't up to Van Brunt in that line yet,

in that, but it wa'n't so intended.

Then Van Brunt began to preach 'pig." Seems Nate had told him that the one thing needful to turn Ozone island into a genuine Natural Life was a pig, and of course he, Nate, had the only pig in creation that was worth buying.

"He showed it to me the other morn ways at her. "I don't think I've heard ing," says Van. "The prettiest little him mention business since he's been black and white fellow you ever saw, down. No, 'tain't that, according to Martin. Miss Talford saw him yesterday before she came over, and She looked at me then pretty hard; she said he was a dear. You might be repairing a sty for him in your odd but I was as wooden-faced as a cigar

ones, too, was pretty well filled up for guess not. What made you think the next few days. The Heavenlies loafed and superintended and smoked and fished and ate. All I had to do was to turn out with the gulls, and toms. Didn't know but he was fretcook breakfast, and clear away, and ting about some young woman. He's wash dishes, and build hen yards, and a fine chap, that young Hartley. It'll fix up a leaky pig pen, and get ready She didn't say much more, but she dust, and dig clams, and make beds, looked at me every once in a while as | and get dinner, and sail a boat, and if she was wondering. I never let on. chop wood, and bundle up washing for I was as innocent and easy as the cat Nate to take to Huldy Ann, and scour with the cream on its whiskers. I had knives, and-and-well, there was a sneaking hope that I might have plenty more. Seven or eight hundred

boosted Hartley a little mite, and I felt good down one side. Then I thought of Van, and I felt mean all After a spell the Twins and Miss Talford happened along, and what a time Van Brunt made when he see his "Well, well!" he says. "Is this the way you hurry back to 'see what the dear children are doing? Sol, you old have the live stock at the shore ready

"How's the menagerie coming. sight, Miss Talford; and now look at Nate?" I asked. "In cages or on the

"Oh, I'll box 'em for you, Sol," he says. "The hens in one box and the pig in another. The pig's pretty thin -I mean young, so he won't be no heft

Wednesday morning the Heavenly gardening begun. One patch for Van Brunt and the other for Hartley. They had seeds by the peck, more or less, brought over by Scudder's express and charged for at undertaker's prices. The Twins started in with a vengeance. I showed 'em how. For once I was superintendent and the job suited me fine-nothing would have tickled me more, unless 'twas to turn in and take a nap.

Van takes one hoe and Hartley the other. Each of 'em was actually round-shouldered from the weight of the seeds in their pockets. They had cucumber seeds, and melon seeds, and land knows what. Wonder to me was they didn't try oranges and pineapples. And in the middle of July!

"Now, Martin," says Van. "Here goes! Bet you fifty I get the first cucumber." "I'll go you," says Martin, shucking

enough to want to come again, have "Like it as well here as you do over such ambitious farmers in your life as they was-just then.

"Kind of hard work, ain't it?" says I, watching their front hair get damp and stick to their foreheads.

"All right," I says. "Heave shead give your love to Marcellus' spook if and recreate. I've got to work, my-

self." So I went in and swept out the dinbetter come too," he says. "You take ing room. Once in a while, through my advice and leave this blooming the open window, I'd get a sight of 'em

> else's corns get pinched. When they come in to dinner they was just slopping over with joy. Gardening was more fun than a barrel of monkeys. But I noticed that when Van got up from the table he rit kind of "stendy by jerks" as if he had kinks in his back, and Martin moved his shoulders slow and easy and said

"Ouch!" under his breath when he

reached too far. They didn't seem to be in any real hurry to get back to work, either. Stayed on the porch, and smoked two cigars instead of one. I had to chuck out a hint about getting them seeds covered up quick afore they'd leave their chairs. Then they went, and I could see the hoes moving; but they

They turned in right after supper, which was unusual. Next morning i didn't hear a word about gardens. The conversation was pretty limited and doleful, being separated with grunts and groans, so to speak. When Van Brunt dropped his napkin he hollered

But they was rigged at last and at | Hartley red with his jett hand and kept the right in his jacket side pockmackerel gulls. They commenced to et. They didn't seem to enjoy that

> "Well," says I, to brighten things up; "I callate them cucumbers is ready to eat, pretty nigh, by this time. Started on your corn, yet? No? Well, you mustn't lose no time. It's late in the season now. Come along with me and I'll get you going."

I headed for the door as I spoke They looked at each other again.

"It's pretty cloudy for planting, isn't it?" asks Hartley, "We might be caught in the rain, you know." "Rain your granny!" says I. "Them

clouds is nothing but heat fog. It'll burn right off." "Wait till we finish our clears, skip-

per," says Van. "No," says I. "You can smoke and plant at the same time. Smoke 'Il

drive away the mosquitoes." They got up then and followed me out. The hoes was laying by the beds and I handed 'em one aplece. They took 'em, not with what you'd call enthuslasm, but more the way the boy took the licking-believing 'twas more blessed to give than to receive. The cucumber beds was begun beautiful, the first hills rounded up fine and lovely. But the tail-end ones looked like the pauper section of the burying ground, more useful than ornamental I showed 'em how to plant the corn and went away, leaving 'em leaning on their hoes, with a kind of halo of mosquitoes around their heads. My talk about smoke was more or less sarcastic; the mosquitoes on Horsefoot Ozone was smoke-cured and fire-

proof. I got the breakfast work done about ten o'clock and then 'twas time to go after the plg and the hens. I took the skiff oars out of the barn and then walked around by the gardens to see how things was getting on. There laid the hoes by the place where the cornhills was intended to be, but there wa'n't any corn-hills nor any Heavenly gardeners either; not a sign of 'em. I hailed once or twice but didn't get any answer. Then I went on down to the skiff. And there they was sprawled out in the shade of the pines, as comfortable as you please.

"Hello, skipper," says Van Brunt, turning over on one clbow. "We've been waiting for you. We're going with you after the livestock." "You are?" says I. "Got your farm-

"No o." he drawls. "Not precisely. The fact, is Sol. Hartley and I have decided that agricultural labors are not-

ing done so early?

into the water. "Thought 'twas recreation. "For definition see dictionary." he says. "It's a painful condition, not a theory, with us just now. Martin and

I are convinced that what we need is a sea voyage. Come on, Martin." Hartley got up, pretty average gin gerly, and they climbed into the skiff.

I pushed off and begun to row. "Well," I says, after a minute or two, "It ain't for me to suggest anything. but, just for greens-like the old woman stewed the burdock leaves-I'd like to mention that if you want vege tables with the dew, and not icicles, on 'em, you'd better be getting the rest the present standing of that encumber

Van didn't open his eyes. it," he says, lazy I stopped rowing and looked at him

over my shoulder. "Meaning-what?" says I "Just that. You win the bet. Likewise you cultivate the cucumbers. Martin and I, in convention assembled, have nominated you for secretary of

agriculture. We resign. to say it. Thinks I: "I'll wait thi I get

back to Ozone." So I didn't answer, but went on rowing again. The tide was going out fast and 'twas a hard pull, three of it? Get out, you varmint!" This last us in that little skiff, but by and by we part was to a pullet that was flapping reached the main. And there was Scudder's hired boy waiting for us. "Hello," says I. "Where's Huldy

Ann-Mrs. Soudder, I mean?" "She couldn't come," said the boy. But I fetched the hens and things. Here they be."

He had the hens-a dozen of emjammed into one lath coop. The door of it was fastened with a shaky wood button.

"Handle 'em kind of careful," says he. "That button undoes itself sometimes." "Where's the pig?" says Hartley.

"Here he is." We could hear him. He wa'n't in a

box at all, as he'd ought to have been



We Moved Off Stately and Slow, Like an Ocean Liner Leaving Her Dock.

according to contract, but setting in the sand with his hind legs tied together with string. He was whirling in circles with his tall for a pivot, so to speak, and he seemed to be mainly squesi. Little he was, and thinpeared to me to be thin as Nate's milk of human kindness-but the Heavenlies fell down and worshiped him like he was a hog angel.

Well, he weighed four pound and cost six dollars, so that's dear enough for anybody.

I loaded the critters into the skiffthe pig fairly sung psalms while I war doing it-and then the Twins climber aboard.

"All right, skipper," says Van. "Shove off." "Just a minute," says I. "What am

going to do-take the next train!

This transport reems to be pretty well loaded." it was. Van Brunt was on the amidships thwart. Hartley was up in the bow, with the pig between his knees. The chicken coop was piled in

the stern. I ain't no dime show dwarf,

and where I was going to stow myself was too much for me. "Humph!" says Van. "It does look standing room only. Here, skipper; you kneel on the back seat. I'll row I didn't exactly kneel, but I straddled across the stern somehow, with the butt end of the hen roost in my lap and my feet over each rail just clear of

the wet. Nate's boy shoved us into deep water. He had to take off his shoes and stockings to do it, and he was laughing so that he made mighty poor headway

'You pesky young one!" says I, losing my patience. "If you don't tend to your job I'll get out and duck you. What are you giggling at?"

"I ain't giggling," says he. "I'm pushing. Ugh! Haw! baw! Ugh! There you be!" He gave us a final shove and then

went back and rolled around in the

bushes. Somehody was having a good time if we wan't. We moved off stately and slow, like an ocean liner leaving her dock. We didn't have any hand, but the pig and hens furnished music. The skiff's rail

was almost a wash and my heels dipped on every little wave. Van rowed like a good one till he got about two-thirds of the way across. Then the tide got a grip on us and he commenced to go slower and groan. He'd miss a stroke and we'd swing half way around. We was going broadside

on most of the fime. By and by Hartley spoke up What makes this pig kick so" says he, like 'twas some kind of a conundrum. The critter seemed to be doing his best to answer it, but his language wa'n't understandable.

"You look out he don't kick that string off his legs," I hollers. I had to holler to make myself heard above the choir.

Why!" says he. "I'll be shot if he "Labors?" says I, shoving the skiff hasn't dene it already." "Hang on to him then!" I yells. "For the land sakes don't let him loose."

He bent forward and looked down.

Van Brunt gives a final groan and stops the oars. 'No use, skipper," he says. "My cucumber recreation has put me out of the race. I wouldn't row another stroke for the control of the Standard Oil. You'll have to be shofer the rest

of the way. I didn't know what a "shofer" was and I don't know now; but I could see trouble coming. "Set where you be!" I shouted.

"Don't move. Thunderation! There you go! The pesky idiot had stood up to of them seeds into the ground. What's stretch, leaving the oars in the rowlocks. Course the skiff swung broadside on and a wave knocked the starboard overboard. Hartley see it going and made a jump and a grab. He

missed it, you might know, but he let go of the pig. I ripped out a lively kind of speech and dove for the port our. The hea coop was in my way and it and me went headfirst into Van Brunt's shirtfront. When I got out of the mix-up both oars was ten yards astern, the I'd been expecting it. And I'd made | pig was doing three laps a minute over up my mind what to say. But I hated | us and under the thwarts and the heas was all out of jall and proud of it.

> Likewise we was drifting out to sea "Well!" says I. "This is nice, ain't

on my shoulders. Would you believe it, all them Heavenly loons done was to laugh.

They just roared. "Ho! ho!" whoops Hartley. "Oh, dear me! This is worth the price of admission."

"Ha! ha!" cackles Van, puffing for breath, and shoving the pig out of his lap. "This is the best ever! The floating garden of Eden! Or the ark! Say, Martin; I begin to sympathize with Noah."

Noah sent out a dove, if I remember right," says Hartley. "Wonder if it would work with a chicken? Where's our Ararat, skipper?" I was mad clean through. Here was twice that I'd been made a fool of on

salt water. I wa'n't used to it and it burt. "The ark was affoat for 40 odd days; you want to remember that," says I. 'And this skiff won't float 40 minutes, loaded the way she is, if she drifts out-

side that point." "Then she mustn't drift there," says Van, cheerful. "I don't want to get wet-not now, with James gone. This is the only presentable suit I've got left. If this is wrecked you'll have to press it. Sol."

My, but I was hopping! Talking about pressing clothes and us next door to going to the bottom!

"T'll press nothing," says I. "And I'll say right now, Mr. Van Brunt, that I won't 'tend to them gardens. You hear-"

Van waved his hand. "Your salary from now on," he says, "will be-"No, it won't. My salary's big mough. It's me that's short-short about 26 hours out of the 24. If I was two men I might do what's needful, but as 'tis I can't. I like you both first-rate-when you ain't too crazybut either you'll have to get me a

helper or I'll have to quit. That is,

if we get out of this mess alive, which

ain't likely." All the time I was preaching this way I was tugging at the 'midships thwart. Finally I got it loose and shoved it over the stern. I was going to try to scall with it.

The Heavenlies was completely upset. Not by the fear of drowning-drat 'em. I don't cal'late they was afraid of anything-but my talk of quitting seemed to knock 'em silly.

"By Jove! you know," says Van.

I looked at Hartley and he at me.

Ozone island? Land knows. Long's the Heavenlies-that is, long's Mr. Van Brunt and Mr. Hartley stay here, guess. It's a restful place, ain't it?" says I, reaching for the next stack of

"Going to run away again?" I asks. "Naw," says Redny. "Not while I'm down here. Miss Agony cries over me

and I'd rather be licked any time than

hair with his fingers. "Sol," he says, "there's good here if you can get at it. Too much good to be running to waste. Ah, hum! Must of your own; must make life almost worth living. That's where you and I

a family of your own."

lion questions. Then he went into the parlor with the rest of the young In-Pretty soon I heard some one speak. I looked through the doorway and see

"He's down on the beach with Margaret. I came back to look after the children."

Agnes stopped for a second in the che said heaftsting, "why you are here. "No," he said, with a little laugh.

"Indeed!" says she, "So far from

ways I didn't hear him. Next thing I "Please excuse me." he says, pretty

We had dinner out doors on the piazza. While it was going on the grown-ups didn't do much talking. It's | that?" precious little fun trying to talk against a typhoon and an earthquake been took that way myself, but it mixed, and that's what them Fresh seemed to me he had all the symp-Air young ones turned that meal into. 'Twas "Hurrah boys! Stand from under!" from the beginning. When I wa'n't filling up fish plates I was dodg be a lucky girl that gets him." ing potate skins and similar bou-

left hand and eat with his right and look pious and shocked all at the same

that one; pretty and full of snap and go. ents" must go on exhibition. So Van lugged 'em down from James' room and lined 'em up on the piazza for inspection. He took a stick for a pointer and gave a lecture about 'em, same as if they was a panorama, pointing out what he called the "feeling" and "atmosphere" of the shell basket and the "perspective" of Marcellus in the

good in his next boss' herry pasture. By and by she clapped her hands. "Oh!" says she, "I've got an idea. Did with his dory and the picnic broke up. children was nodding with their heads on the shoulders of the bigger ones, and I even had to tote two of the littlest in my arms down to the beach. burned and dirty and happy, and

they'd had the bulliest time in their says I to Redny. "Had good time

But the Talford girl laughed and said he wouldn't do at all. He lacked dignity, she said, and didn't look the part. She asked Miss Page if she really didn't think that James would be just the man for them. Agnes said

"Can't I help you, please?" says she picking up a towel. "Land sakes, no!" says I. "You'll

"Here?" says I. "On Horsefoot-on | have got along better.

"He does, hey?" says I. "At three

"Yes. He is to continue to bring us

Small favors thankfully received. I

800-"Oh, Scudder could bring us hav."

"Nine cents a quart. That's only one cent more than you have to pay any of their folks ever took this way?

> Well, 'twas about as cheap as the says Hartley. "Scudder, so Van says, will sell us live Plymouth Rocks at 30 cents a pound. Skipper, you might fix up the poultry yard in your spare

In my "spare" time. There was a joke

moments, Sol." My odd moments and my even them blessed gardens, and sweep and

odd jobs have slipped my memory. The gardens was ready for planting on a Wednesday. Nate fetched over the last dory load of loam the night afore and I spread it afore I got supper. The chickens and the hog was to come on Thursday. I was to take the skiff and go after 'em. Nute being engaged to cart a carry-all load of boarders to Ostable. Huldy Ann was to

hoof?"

to you."

his jacket. "Sol, what do I do next?" I showed him. I started 'em even on cucumber beds. They hoed like they went by steam. You never see

"Work?" says Van. "This is recreation, man!" "So long, Hopper," says I. "Shall I

> laying into the cucumber beds, with the sun blazing down. I grinned. When the boot's been on one leg too long it's kind of nice to see somebody

to me to come and pick it up, and

"Humph!" says I. "Is that "That's the dear," says Van, patting